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Should A Rapist Get The Death Penalty According To The Bible?

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Should A Rapist Get the Death Penalty According to the Bible?

When the subject of rape comes up in Biblical discussion, we often hear about disgust for the law that says the rapist must marry his victim. However, we rarely talk about the fact that the Bible does give us another option. Should a rapist get the death penalty according to the Bible? The story of Dinah provides us with the answer.

Dinah's Rape

As stated in a **previous article (https://www.patheos.com/blogs/reclaimingthetruth/2023/03/girl-17-ordered-to-pay-the-family-of-her-rapist/)**, the Bible provides two responses to rape. The first solution offered by The Torah occurs in the **story of Dinah (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2034&version=NIV)**. The story begins with Dinah being seized and raped by a man named Shechem. The text says Shechem loved Dinah and wanted her for his wife. So, he told his father what he had done and asked her father to get Dinah for his wife.

Shechem's father, Hamor, goes to Jacob and offers him any price for Dinah's hand in marriage. He further offers Jacob peace and land amongst their people. Yet, it was Dinah's brothers who replied. The text tells us:

"13 Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor. 14 They said to them, "We can't do such a thing; we can't give our sister to a man who is not circumcised. That would be a disgrace to us. 15 We will enter into an agreement with you on one condition only: that you become like us by circumcising all your males. 16 Then we will give you our daughters and take your daughters for ourselves. We'll settle among you and become one people with you. 17 But if you will not agree to be circumcised, we'll take our sister and go."

Clearly, the brothers believe Dinah was raped. They are willing to take her back with them rather than cast her out in disgrace, as would have been the case if she had consented to premarital sex. So believing that she was mistreated, they plot revenge against her rapist.

Should A Rapist Get the Death Penalty According to the Bible? Yes!!

Shechem and Hamor left and were circumcised, along with every man in their city. Three days later, while all the men of the village were still in pain from circumcision, Jacob's sons attacked the village. They slaughtered every male in the village. They then took Dinah back to her father's house and looted the city. The text says:

" 26 They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house and left. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the dead bodies and looted the city where[c] (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2034&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1008c) their sister had been defiled. 28 They

seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields. [29] They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in the houses."

When Jacob becomes upset that his sons have done this, because he fears repercussions from the other tribes living in the land, they reply "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?" Here we see that Dinah's brothers believed her reputation was worth more than the lives of an entire city of men. The text records no response from Jacob to this question. Rather, G-d speaks to Jacob.

The Covenant

The Torah says, " Then G-d said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." Jacob did so, and G-d blessed him and changed his name to Israel. G-d said "[11] And God said to him, "I am God Almighty[f (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+35&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1023f)]; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. [12] The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." Because Jacob's sons defended their sister, G-d moved Jacob to Bethel and called him Israel. A covenant between G-d, Jacob, and all Jacob's descendants was made.

The Reputation Of One Woman Is Worth the Lives of Many Men. Should A Rapist Get the Death Penalty According to the Bible? Yes!

Surely, in G-d's eyes then, the actions of Jacob's sons were noble and right. Should a rapist get the death penalty? G-d was on the side of those who said yes. He sided with the brothers who believed the rapist and all his people deserved death. Therefore, Dinah reminds us that a woman's reputation is worth the lives of many men. She calls us to remember that a woman is to be honored, loved, and treated with respect. Any wrong done to a woman must be punished severely. One life is not enough to pay for the wrong done to a woman.

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